

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4741

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16825

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, TH, US
SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL
INFORMATION ON HOST GOVERNMENTS--THAILAND

REF: (A) STATE 159747 (B) BANGKOK 14157

1. DESPITE THOROUGH SEARCH OF FILES, EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO
LOCATE BANGKOK RESPONSE TO 76 STATE 037591. CURRENT
RESPONSES TO PARA 7 OF THAT MESSAGE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) OBJECTIVES FOR 1977 - THAILAND HAS FAIRLY REALISTIC VIEW
OF ITS ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS AND HOLDS FEW PRETENSIONS TO
INFLUENCE OR DESIRES FOR LEADERSHIP ON MULTILATERAL ISSUE.
MOREOVER, ON MANY ISSUES THAT COME UP AT UN AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL BODIES, THAI INTEREST IS MINIMAL, AND THAI FEEL
RELATIVELY RELAXED ABOUT THE OUTCOME. POLICY PAPERS FOR
ISSUES LIKELY TO ARISE AT UNGA ARE PREPARED AND GENERAL
INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED, BUT DELEGATIONS TO UNGA AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ARE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE LEEWAY IN
SUPPORTING INITIATIVES AND DECIDING HOW TO VOTE ON SPECIFIC
RESOLUTIONS. THE DYNAMISM OF THAI PARTICIPATION IN
MULTILATERAL FORUMS THEREFORE DEPENDS MORE ON INDIVIDUALS
REPRESENTING THAILAND THAN ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HOME. BASICALLY,
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THAILAND ATTEMPTS TO LOOK OUT FOR ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS
WHICH IT VIEWS AS PROTECTING MARKETS FOR COMMODITY EXPORTS
(PARTICULARLY RICE, TIN AND RUBBER) WHILE GUARANTEEING SUPPLY
OF NECESSARY IMPORTS SUCH AS PETROLEUM. THAILAND
REMAINS SENSITIVE TO ATTITUDES OF ITS TRADITIONAL
WESTERN FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY THE U.S., ITS ASEAN PARTNERS,
AND THE OIL-SUPPLYING NATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. THE

COUNTRY'S ANTI-COMMUNIST FEELINGS ALSO HAVE SOME EFFECT ON VOTING PATTERS, BUT THE THAI WILL GENERALLY ATTEMPT TO SEEK COMPROMISES AND AVOID PROVOKING COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IF POSSIBLE. THAILAND HAS SOUGHT, SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON IN 1975, TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ITS COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS AND SO HAS AN INTEREST IN AVOIDING CONFRONTATION WITH COMMUNIST STATES WHEREVER POSSIBLE. THAILAND ABSTAINS FREQUENTLY ON POLITICAL QUESTIONS WHICH IT BELIEVES DO NOT DIRECTLY AFFECT ITS INTERESTS.

(B) REF B CONTAINS COMMENTS ON EFFECTS OF ASEAN ON MULTI-LATERAL POLICY-MAKING. IT MAY ALSO BE WORTH NOTING THAT THAILAND DOES NOT TOTALLY ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THE "WOUTH" IN NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, BUT PREFERS TO CONSIDER ITSELF MORE ADVANCED THAN MOST OF THE SO-CALLED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. AS A MAJOR FOOD PRODUCER AND EXPORTER IN THE MIDDLE RANK OF LDC'S AS MEASURED BY PER CAPITA GNP, THIS IS A LOGICAL VIEW. THIS ATTITUDE HAS BEEN STRESSED BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (AND CORRECTLY SO) TO SHOW THAT THAILAND DOESN'T AUTOMATICALLY ALIGN ITSELF AGAINST THE U.S. OR OTHER RICH NATIONS AND POTENTIAL AID DONORS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS.

(C) SEE COMMENTS IN REF B. THAILAND'S DELEGATIONS DO ONLY LIMITED REPORTING OF EVENTS AT CONFERENCES TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. OFTEN WHEN EMBASSY APPROACHES MFA ABOUT A SPECIFIC TOPIC UNDER CONSIDERATION, MFA IS UNAWARE OF ISSUE OR WHAT ITS DELEGATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT MAY BE. THIS IS THE EXPERIENCE OF NOT ONLY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HERE, BUT ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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SHARED BY FELLOW DIPLOMATIS, SEVERAL OF WHOM HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THEY HAVE SIMPLY ADVISED THEIR GOVERNMENTS THAT APPROACHING THE MFA TO INSTRUCT THAI DELEGATIONS IS WASTE OF TIME.

(D) INDIVIDUALS HEADING DELEGATIONS HAVE CONSIDERABLE POWER IN SENSE THAT RTG GENERALLY PAYS SO LITTLE ATTENTION TO THEIR ACTIVITIES, AND THEY CAN THUS EXERCISE INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, INDEPENDANT POLITICAL POWER AS ENVISAGED BY PARA 7 (D) QUESTION.

(E) AGAIN, SEE REF B. THAILAND HAS NOT, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE DURING PAST FEW YEARS, SOLICITED THROUGH EMBASSY USG'S SUPPORT ON MILTILATERAL MATTERS OTHER THAN SUPPORT FOR CANDIDACIES OF VARIOUS THAI OFFICIALS TO ELECTED POSITIONS.

2. BANGKOK'S MLO IS FSO LINDA STILLMAN, POLITICAL SECTION.
O'DONOHUE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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